

**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
May 2008**

Briefing note: sustainable clothing roadmap, summary of proposed action areas and roadmap process

1.0 Introduction

The UK government is taking action to identify, understand and address the sustainability impacts arising from products, services and materials consumed and used in the UK. Defra Sustainable Products & Materials (SPM), alongside BERR, is at the forefront of this work, which falls within its strategic priority of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), and is taking it forward through several work strands. One of these work strands is an initial trial of ten product roadmaps, drawn from four high impact product areas. Clothing is one of these priority products.

This document outlines the proposed areas of action for the Sustainable Clothing Roadmap (2.0) and the roadmap process (3.0).

For further information and background documents on the Sustainable Clothing Roadmap see

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/products/clothing.htm>

For further information on Defra SCP activities see

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/scp/>

2.0 Proposed Action Areas

From an analysis of the existing evidence and stakeholder consultation proposed action areas for the roadmap are summarised as follows:

1. Improving Environmental Performance across the Supply Chain	
Sustainable Design	Define metrics & guides for industry to incorporate sustainable clothing design techniques into the clothing/fashion sector. Profile best practice in sustainable clothing design to include raw materials production (green factory examples), packaging, retail and end of life. Feasibility of shifting from “fast fashion” to “slow fashion”
Fibres & Fabrics	Clarify the sustainability benefits and limits of organic cotton and the role for other fibre types considering issues e.g. all impacts not just toxicity related, land use requirements and world competition for land use (e.g. crops for food, biofuels, cloths and other applications) Determine the sustainability impacts and business

	<p>case for alternative fibres e.g. hemp, bamboo, nettle, Tencel® (Lyocell wood based) or Ingeo® (corn based)</p> <p>Fill remaining evidence gaps for fibres and fabrics</p>
Maximising Reuse, Recycling and end of life management	<p>Clarify the waste textile statistics at end of life for reuse and recycling (charity shops, other secondary markets and exports) in light of current discrepancies raised by stakeholders</p> <p>Feasibility assessments for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • end of life clothing collection for UK consumer and public sector markets • UK clothing producer responsibility scheme • increasing reuse outlets in UK and overseas • upcycling opportunities - fibres types, role of blends/composites, solving consistency & contamination problems, design for disassembly and technologies, markets • downcycling opportunities – existing secondary markets, creating new markets for recycled grades (linkage with WRAP), technology and capacity issues <p>Investigate the sustainability implications of the UK current practice of exporting used cloths to developing country markets e.g. Africa</p> <p>Development of a Quality Protocol for waste textiles to facilitate reuse and recycling (similar to the one WRAP has done with waste for aggregates)</p> <p>Infrastructure necessary for enabling the environmental benefits of biodegradable and compostable clothing.</p>
Cloths Cleaning	<p>Sustainability assessment and business case for cleaning technologies to reduce the energy and chemicals intensity of cloths maintenance e.g. waterless cleaning. fibre coatings, detergent technologies, washer/dryer technologies</p> <p>Wash at 30°C review to assess & maximise consumer behaviour role</p> <p>Increase the market presence of non solvent dry cleaning technologies</p>
Instruments for improving traceability along the	<p>Organic certification for wool, silk and other natural fibres</p>

supply chain	<p>Role for Country of Origin Labelling in light of existing schemes</p> <p>Using technology e.g. scanners to enable country or origin & other traceability characteristics e.g. blend composition, counterfeiting etc.</p> <p>Improvements to industry standards, auditing and verification</p> <p>Determining ways to overcome the barriers of the complex, global clothing SC structure to enable greater control and traceability e.g. role of vendors, agents, brokers and sub-contractors. (Learnings from other sectors with global, complex supply chains e.g. waste and electronics)</p> <p>Clothing sector CSR & EMS improvements</p>
2. Consumption Trends and Behaviour	
	<p>Determine evidence on consumption behaviour for clothing; laundering behaviours; role of clothing icons / celebrity and how to leverage these for sustainability and sustainable consumption</p>
3. Awareness, Media, Education and Networks	
	<p>Programmes with the media – mainstream and fashion - for consumer awareness raising on sustainability</p> <p>Education – incorporate sustainability as a mainstream topic in fashion education</p> <p>Profile existing sustainable fashion education leaders</p> <p>Maximise the use of existing networks and industry access to sustainable clothing information (UK & global)</p> <p>Consider the role for a Community of Practice for Sustainable Fashion</p>
4. Creating Market Drivers for Sustainable Clothing	
	<p>Create incentives for buyers and suppliers to source sustainably</p> <p>Incorporate sustainability into procurement in the</p>

	<p>public and private sectors</p> <p>Government procurement trial for uniforms incorporating environment & social/ethical criteria (to include cloths leasing & recovery)</p> <p>Development of a league table for sustainable clothing</p>
5. Ethics and Trade	
	<p>ETI considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase membership • consider involving missing stakeholders e.g. trade unions & workers • role of international law • improving enforcement <p>Tackle living wage & gender issues</p> <p>Consider integrated environmental & ethical industry standards</p> <p>Incorporation of animal welfare in industry standards as distinct from only having them in voluntary company policies at present</p> <p>Increase uptake of Fair Trade</p> <p>Overcoming industry structure & supply chain barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • migrant workers & short term contracts, trend of factory to factory & country to country moving. • Linkages with WTO and MFA Forum • Procurement criteria and contracts along supply chain • Consider options for reducing critical path time pressure – is production time too short and a key causal factor?

3.0 Roadmap Process

The following is an outline of the process and delivery structure:

The Clothing Roadmap process

- This is a collaborative process, seeking the active involvement stakeholders, with a strong action focus.
- The process involves gathering the evidence on sustainability and clothing, engaging stakeholders, agreeing and implementing actions.
- To ensure effective, inclusive stakeholder engagement and ownership, a series of events and meetings are being used to present the evidence, determine stakeholders views and suggested action areas. The first multi-stakeholder event was on 05 Sept. 2007 at Chatham House.
- Based on the existing evidence and the input of stakeholders views, priority areas for action have been proposed.
- A variety of instruments could be used to implement the agreed actions. Key considerations will be the ability of instruments to influence the sustainability of clothing within and outside the UK in light of the global nature of the clothing supply chain as well as competition concerns.

Role of Defra and other stakeholders

- Defra's role is to gather the initial evidence on sustainability impacts of clothing in order to bring the facts to the table and provide a platform for stakeholder engagement and actions to be agreed.
- Defra will take actions within its remit of environmental protection.
- Defra is looking to other stakeholders to participate and take ownership of actions in their respective areas.

Stakeholder Participation

- Stakeholders are welcome to participate by giving their views and have a watching brief.
- For those stakeholders who are prepared to be part of the action, a working group (or groups) with defined Terms of Reference may be used for developing the actions and moving them forward.

4.0 Further Information:

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<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/products/clothing.htm>